

# 2024 PERENNIAL FARM GATHERING PRESS PACKET



Press webpage  
Savanna Institute logos  
Creative Commons agroforestry photos

[savannainstitute.org/PFG2024](https://savannainstitute.org/PFG2024)



## PRESS CONTACT

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Thank you for attending the Perennial Farm Gathering!

You have come to the right place -- here you will meet the farmers, chefs, artists, researchers, and industry professionals who are working together to scale up agroforestry and perennial agriculture across the country. For over ten years, the Savanna Institute has served as a catalyst for this work, and the Perennial Farm Gathering is our signature event that brings these experts and enthusiasts together each year.

I hope you will find the resources on the following pages useful. Please contact me if you have any follow-up questions, or if you would like to utilize our photo library or contact list of farmers and agroforestry experts.

Thank you,  
Jacob

### Social Media Links

[Website: savannainstitute.org](http://savannainstitute.org)

[YouTube: @SavannaInstitute](https://www.youtube.com/@SavannaInstitute)

[Podcast: Perennial AF](https://www.podcastaddict.com/podcast/1488888)

[Facebook: @SavannaInstitute](https://www.facebook.com/SavannaInstitute)

[Instagram: @savannainstitute](https://www.instagram.com/savannainstitute)

[LinkedIn: @SavannaInstitute](https://www.linkedin.com/company/savanna-institute)

### What is the Savanna Institute?

Inspired by the oak savannas native to this region, the Savanna Institute supports the growth of diverse, perennial farming in the Upper Mississippi and Great Lakes watersheds, with a focus on tree crops and agroforestry. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 2013, with headquarters in Spring Green, WI and Champaign, IL.

Website: [savannainstitute.org](http://savannainstitute.org)

### What is the Perennial Farm Gathering?

Since the early days of the Savanna Institute, the Perennial Farm Gathering (PFG) has served as the organization's biggest event of the year, providing perennial food and farming enthusiasts, practitioners, and supporters with an opportunity to gather to share knowledge and learn from each other. The event includes shared meals and social time, guest speakers, workshops, and networking opportunities. The first Perennial Farm Gathering was held around a farmer's kitchen table and had only a handful of attendees, while the most recent in-person PFG (in 2019) and subsequent virtual PFGs have included hundreds of participants.

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# RELEVANT TERMS

<b>Perennial Agriculture</b>	Agricultural systems based on the use of perennial plants, which can grow for multiple years, providing soil & water quality benefits. (Examples include tree crops, well-managed pasture, and perennial grains.)
<b>Regenerative Agriculture</b>	A popular name for agricultural practices that focus on restoring soil health and human health.
<b>Agroforestry</b>	Farming methods that intentionally incorporate trees or woody plants. Agroforestry is one of the oldest forms of agriculture and has been practiced around the world for thousands of years.
<b>Alley Cropping</b>	An agroforestry practice involving the cultivation of crops in the alleys between regularly spaced rows of trees or shrubs.
<b>Forest Farming</b>	An agroforestry practice involving the cultivation of specialty crops on forested land, often in partial or full shade.
<b>Food Forest or Forest Garden</b>	A diverse planting of tree crops and other edible plants that produce food in a managed, forest-like system.
<b>Riparian Buffers</b>	Strips of permanent vegetation planted along a stream, lake or other wetland to stabilize soil and reduce nutrient, pesticide and sediment runoff.
<b>Silvopasture</b>	An agroforestry practice in which livestock, forages, and trees or woody shrubs are managed together in a way that is mutually beneficial.
<b>Windbreaks</b>	A common agroforestry practice in which farmers plant rows of trees or shrubs along boundaries or field edges to interrupt airflow and reduce soil erosion, pesticide contamination, or moisture loss.

# RECENT PRESS COVERAGE

Yale Environment 360: [How Agroforestry Could Help Revitalize America's Corn Belt](#)  
Sep. 10th, 2024 - by Tom Philpott

Modern Farmer: [On the Ground with the Midwest Farmers Going All-In On Agroforestry](#)  
Feb. 13th, 2024 - by Sheila Julson

Popular Science: [This Ancient Farming Practice Could Get A Boost From the US Farm Bill](#)  
May 20th, 2023 - by Ashley Stimpson

Civil Eats: [Can Farming With Trees Save the Food System?](#)  
May 17th, 2023 - by Lisa Held

Aeon: [The Return of Silvopasture](#)  
March 30th, 2023 - by Liz Carlisle & Niki Mazaroli

## QUOTES FROM PAST PFG ATTENDEES:

“So inspiring! My favorite part is seeing the progress every year.”

“It’s a great chance to connect with all the agroforestry colleagues I rarely get to see.”

“I truly appreciate the sense that we are all in this together. Everyone is very willing to share, open for discussion and promotes the growth of others.”

“A few years into my chef career I just realized the complete absence of indigenous foods. Even for myself... I realized that I could name less than a handful of Lakota recipes that were truly Lakota. You know, things without cream of mushroom soup in it. So for us it became more than just serving foods, it became talking about it and about why it isn’t here... It’s also really important to see the benefits of why understanding indigenous foods could help all of us in the future.”

**-CHEF SEAN SHERMAN, TEDXSIUXFALLS PRESENTATION, 2020**

“When we got started, the Savanna Institute was a small group of farmers and researchers who got together to share their experience, to learn from each other. We’ve grown since then, but that coming together, and people meeting and learning from each other, that was the reason the Savanna Institute started as an organization, and that remains the reason we’re an organization today. And that’s the heart and soul of the Perennial Farm Gathering.”

**-KEEFE KEELEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SAVANNA INSTITUTE**

“In 2014, we had the first unofficial PFG, basically around a dinner table on a farm. That was maybe ten people. Then the following year, in 2015, it was maybe 30 people. And it just kept growing from there.”

**-KEVIN WOLZ, SAVANNA INSTITUTE FOUNDING BOARD MEMBER**

## SPEAKER INFORMATION



**Fruitful Libations: A Workshop for Perennial Growers and Beverage Makers**

Stan Frankenthaler, Innovator & Chef, Culinary Innovation Consulting  
Ele Muni, CEO/Founder, Farmers and Robots  
Derek Nedvek, General Manager, The Flower Factory  
Dave & Ann Buehler, Owners, Buehler Organics  
Heidi Leuszler, Owner & Head Chef, Berries and Flour: Bakery & Harvest Goods  
Mindy McCord, Co-Founder, Siren Shrub Company

**Deep Roots & New Shoots Awards**

Dr. Don Wyse (posthumously), Deep Roots Awardee (posthumously), Forever Green Initiative  
Jacque & Dan Enge, Farmers, New Shoots Award Recipients, Veggie Emporium  
Philip Matthews, Director of Programs, Wormfarm Institute  
Colin Cureton, Director of Adoption and Scaling, UMN Forever Green Initiative

**Keynote: The (R)evolution of Indigenous Foodways and Book Signing**

Sean Sherman, Indigenous Food Advocate, NĀTIFS  
Beth Dooley, Author and chef, Beth Dooley's Kitchen

**How to Consistently Grow High Quality Berries**

Mike Breckel, Elderberry Farmer, Ocooch Mountain Elderberries, LLC  
Jim & Bernis Ingvaldson, Owners, HoneyberryUSA  
Erin Schneider, CFO (Chief Fruit/Food Forest Officer), Hilltop Community Farm  
Wandy Peralta, Farmer, Branches and Berries Farm

**Farm Hacks for Agroforestry Systems**

Graham Cassellius, Owner, Cassell Hollow Farm  
Kevin Wolz, CEO, Canopy Farm Management

**Culinary Creativity With the Fruits and Nuts of Agroforestry**

Odessa Piper, American restaurateur and chef  
Beth Dooley, Author and chef, Beth Dooley's Kitchen  
Representative Francesca Hong, Wisconsin State Representative

**Growing Markets Panel**

Terry Dunham, Owner, River Hills Harvest  
Ariel Pressman, Food Systems Consultant, Renewing the Countryside/Whole Farm Strategies  
Pamela Saunders, Grower, American Hazelnut Company  
Chris Patton, Midwest Elderberry Cooperative

**Finding the Balance Between Biodiversity and Profitability**

Nate Lawrence, Ecosystem Scientist, Savanna Institute  
Eliza Greenman, Germplasm Specialist, Savanna Institute

**Why Trees Die (and what we can do to help them!)**

Steve Gabriel, Farming with Trees Collective members, Wellspring Forest Farm

**Pushing the Boundaries Between Forest and Pasture: Tales from two ecologists turned Farmers**

Cherrie Nolden, Agroecologist and multi-species grazier, 1dr Acres Farm  
Brett Chedzoy, Regional Extension Forester and full-time grazier, Cornell University

**Urban Oases: Cultivating Perennial Crops and Resilient Green Spaces in Cities**

Brian Lampert, Teacher, George Washington High School  
Ruth Sanchez, Wisconsin Food Forests  
Tomas Delgado, Program Manager, National Farm to School Network

**Enhancing Conservation through Agroforestry: Collaborative Approaches to Strengthen Technical Assistance**

Carina Isbell, Research Manager - Technical Assistance Accelerator for Conservation, Meridian Institute  
Carrie Castille, Meridian Institute

**Perennial Problems & Opportunities: Crowdsourcing Solutions**

PJ Connolly, Business Analyst, Savanna Institute

**Emerging Agroforestry Research, Resources, and Tools**

Nate Lawrence, Ecosystem Scientist, Savanna Institute  
Eleanor Johnson, Demonstration and Partner Farm Coordinator (WI), Savanna Institute  
Kevin Wolz, CEO, Canopy Farm Management  
Safa Hafiz, University of Wisconsin-Madison

**The Future Now: a Perennial Vision for Agriculture, Taking Root Today**

Tiffany LaShae; Farmer, Soil Steward, and Educator, Black-eyed Peace Project  
Jose Franco, Research Agroecologist, USDA-ARS, Dairy Forage Research Center, and incoming Director of Research, Savanna Institute

Press Release: August 28th

# **SAVANNA INSTITUTE WILL BRING TOGETHER FARMERS AND CHEFS AT ITS PERENNIAL FARM GATHERING OCTOBER 6TH-8TH IN WISCONSIN**

**Free Farm Tours in Spring Green open to all on Saturday, October 5th**

Spring Green, Wis. – Back in person for the first time in five years, the Perennial Farm Gathering hosted by the Savanna Institute will take place Sunday, October 6th to Tuesday, October 8th at Monona Terrace in Madison. Chef Sean Sherman, founder of The Sioux Chef, will deliver the event keynote “The (R)evolution of Indigenous Foodways” alongside more than 20 sessions on food and farming practices focused on beneficial perennial crops.

Perennial fruit and nut crops, such as elderberries, black currants, chestnuts, and hazelnuts are among the favorites on the agenda at this year’s gathering. Chefs Odessa Piper and Beth Dooley will host a session on “Culinary Creativity With the Fruits and Nuts of Agroforestry,” and forest farming expert Steve Gabriel will offer practical advice to growers in his session: “Why Trees Die (and what we can do to help them!).” Graziers Brett Chedzoy and Cherrie Nolden will share their journey in “Pushing the Boundaries Between Forest and Pasture: Tales from Two Ecologists Turned Farmers.”

Free farm tours will be offered at Savanna Institute’s farm campus in Spring Green before the gathering on Saturday, October 5th, 1-5pm, along with live music, a cider press, and tastings.

Sponsors for the event include Compeer Financial, Canopy Farm Management, Agroforestry Coalition, Marbleseed, NĀTIFS, American Farmland Trust, River Hills Harvest, American Hazelnut Company, The Nature Conservancy, USDA National Agroforestry Center, University of Missouri Center for Agroforestry, Wisconsin Farmers Union, Wormfarm Institute, Alliant Energy, Cutler Fence, Meadowlark, Nature’s Path, Scattergood, Green Lands Blue Waters, Midwestern BioAg, Appalachian Forest Farmer Coalition, and Organic Valley.

**What:** Perennial Farm Gathering, hosted by the Savanna Institute

**When:** Saturday, October 5th, 1pm - 5pm (Farm Tours, Spring Green)  
Sunday, October 6th - Tuesday, October 8th (PFG2024, Madison)

**Who:** Perennial agriculture enthusiasts, farmers, foresters, chefs, Indigenous leaders, activists, researchers, policymakers, and investors

**Where:** Monona Terrace, Madison WI with Farm Tours in Spring Green, WI  
Register at [savannainstitute.org/pfg2024](https://savannainstitute.org/pfg2024)

Press Release: April 18th

# **INDIGENOUS FOOD ADVOCATE CHEF SEAN SHERMAN TO DELIVER KEYNOTE AT 2024 PERENNIAL FARM GATHERING**

**The Sioux Chef founder will speak at the Monona Terrace in Madison on October 7th**

Spring Green, WI - The Savanna Institute announced today that Oglala Lakota Chef Sean Sherman will deliver his keynote address “The (R)evolution of Indigenous Foodways” at the 2024 Perennial Farm Gathering. The gathering, held each year for perennial food and farming enthusiasts, will be in Madison this year Sunday, October 6th to Tuesday, October 8th at the Monona Terrace.

Born and raised on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, Chef Sherman has dedicated his career to supporting and promoting Indigenous food systems and Native food sovereignty. His goal is to make Indigenous foods more accessible to as many communities as possible through the non-profit North American Traditional Indigenous Food Systems (NĀTIFS) and its Indigenous Food Lab, a professional Indigenous kitchen and training Center.

“A few years into my chef career I just realized the complete absence of indigenous foods,” Chef Sherman said in a TEDx talk in 2020. “Even for myself... I realized that I could name less than a handful of Lakota recipes that were truly Lakota. So for us it became more than just serving foods, it became talking about it and about why it isn’t here... It’s also really important to see the benefits of why understanding indigenous foods could help all of us in the future.”

Chef Sherman published his first book in 2017 with author Beth Dooley, *The Sioux Chef’s Indigenous Kitchen*, which received the James Beard Award for Best American Cookbook in 2018. In 2021, he opened Minnesota’s first full service Indigenous restaurant, *Owamni by The Sioux Chef*, which received the James Beard Award for Best New Restaurant in America for 2022. In 2023, he was named one of *TIME Magazine’s* 100 Most Influential People.



# GROWING HEALTHY, PERENNIAL FOODS IN THE MIDWEST

A wide variety of tasty and healthy perennial agroforestry crops can be successfully grown in temperate Midwest climates and soils.

- Chestnuts, a carbohydrate-rich nut, are nutritionally similar to brown rice, but with twice the protein.
- Persimmons are the most nutritionally dense native fruit in North America, containing 19 of 20 amino acids. They can be harvested for fresh fruit markets, processed into pulp, or used as livestock feed in silvopasture systems.
- Black currants are a good source of antioxidants, with three times as much vitamin C as oranges and as much potassium as bananas. They can grow in partial shade and poor soils and are extremely cold tolerant.
- The pawpaw is North America's largest native fruit. "You can't believe it grows here!" says Savanna Institute researcher Adam D'Angelo. "It has a taste and texture somewhere between a banana and a mango. It grows all across the eastern US - it's been eaten by indigenous people for thousands of years, fed the Lewis and Clark expedition, and was supposedly George Washington's favorite fruit. But most people aren't familiar with it."

"Agroforestry products are some of the most delicious and companionable foods that I know. Black currants are the 'secret sauce' of so much of my cooking. It's essential to get cooks and producers and marketers all in the same room, tasting these foods. We need to bring them all into conversation if we're going to make people more aware of these nutritious perennial foods and their planet-friendly, soil-building capabilities."

-Odessa Piper, Deep-roots food advocate and founder of L'Etoile, a pioneering farm-to-table restaurant in Madison, Wisconsin

"Initially, I didn't have a customer base. I actually began by doing cold calls with my wild fruits. And I just went to the chefs with pawpaws or persimmons or wild plum and I'd say, could you use this? And the response was usually 'oh my, yes'. Because the flavor is so amazing."

-Linda Hezel, Agroforestry Apprenticeship mentor & farmer

"I think it's really important to share the stories of what it takes to get this food back on the land and how good it is for the land... I do think people are going to be more inclined to try something new if they understand that the flavor is going to be different, or they understand there are more nutrients in it, or they understand it's going to have a better impact on the land."

-Beth Dooley, James Beard Award-winning food writer and cookbook author



# PERENNIAL FARMING OFFERS SOLUTIONS

“The great thing about agroforestry is that it can be a ‘both, and’ solution. We don’t have to choose between using land for production or for conservation. With perennial agriculture, farmers can grow food and generate income while also building soil health, improving water quality, and creating wild life habitat. Agroforestry is an opportunity for agriculture to do more good, not just less harm.”

-Keefe Keeley, Executive Director, Savanna Institute

“We are interested in having an orchard system that mimics a natural ecosystem to the greatest extent possible. We’ve started implementing some agroforestry principles as a way to achieve those goals. We’re interested in doing this for the health of the trees and the quality of fruit that we can produce, but also for the soil health, water health and health and satisfaction for our family.”

- Rachel Henderson, Agroforestry Apprenticeship Mentor Farmer  
Mary Dirty Face Farm, Menomonie, Wisconsin

## AGROFORESTRY FOR CLIMATE

“Agroforestry is an underutilized tool in our collective efforts to support rural economies while mitigating climate change. Putting more trees on agricultural lands creates more resilient agricultural systems, and expanding the production of commodities grown in agroforestry systems can help drive new market opportunities to build an increasingly climate-smart food system.”

-Audrey Epp Schmidt, Agroforestry Program Manager for  
The Nature Conservancy’s North America Regenerative Agriculture program

One acre of windbreaks (a common agroforestry practice) can remove 1.5 tons of carbon from the air per year — that’s about how many carbon emissions a car produces in a year.

Fargione JE, Bassett S, Boucher T, et al (2018) Natural climate solutions for the United States. Science Advances. <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.aat1869>

United States Environmental Protection Agency (2024) Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator. <https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator>

If landholders adopted agroforestry on half of US farmland, it could offset 7–35% of annual US greenhouse gas emissions, depending on management and growing conditions.

Fargione JE, Bassett S, Boucher T, et al (2018) Natural climate solutions for the United States. Science Advances. <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.aat1869>

Greene H, Kazanski CE, Kaufman J, et al (2023) Silvopasture offers climate change mitigation and profit potential for farmers in the eastern United States. Front Sustain Food Syst. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsufs.2023.1158459>

A 2023 paper in the journal Nature Climate Change identified agroforestry as “the largest agricultural natural climate solution (NCS) opportunity, comparable to other prominent NCSs such as reforestation and reduced deforestation.”

Terasaki Hart, D.E., Yeo, S., Almaraz, M. et al. Priority science can accelerate agroforestry as a natural climate solution. Nat. Clim. Chang. 13, 1179–1190 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-023-01810-5>



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